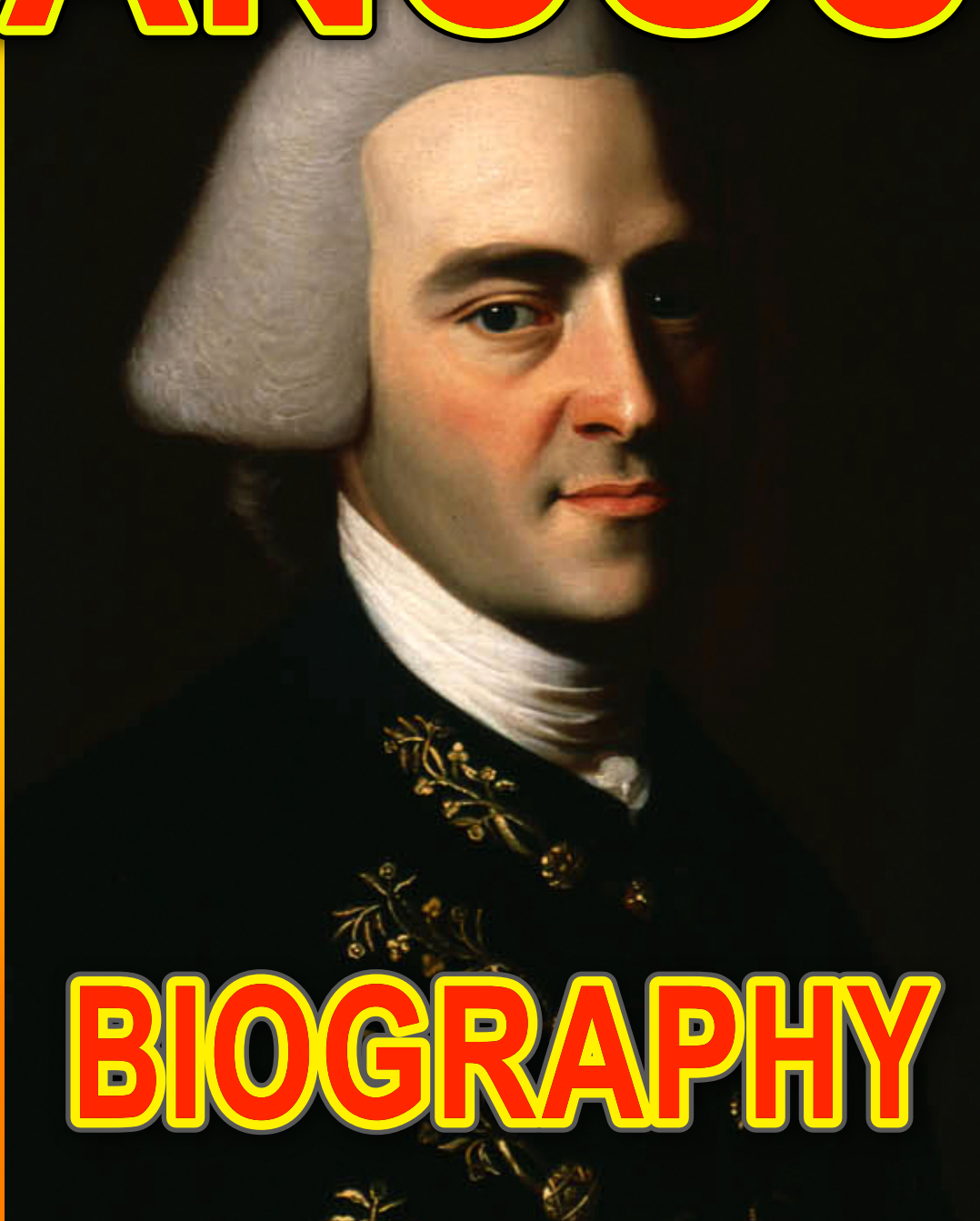


JOHN HANCOCK



BIOGRAPHY

JOHN HANCOCK

John Hancock was born in Massachusetts in 1737, at a time when it was a British colony. Hancock had been raised by his uncle after the death of his parents when he was young. When his uncle died in 1764, Hancock inherited his share of a shipping business, and became very wealthy.

In the 1760s, Hancock also got involved in politics, first in Boston, and then on a wider colonial level. Around this time, Great Britain began imposing taxes on imports and exports in the colonies. This affected Hancock's business directly, and was also seen as a wider problem for people in the colonies.

Along with figures like Samuel Adams, Hancock was directly involved in protests against the British. He started smuggling goods on his ships to avoid paying the tax on moving them. After he was caught and tried for this, riots broke out in Boston. Not long after that, he was involved in the build-up to the Boston Tea Party, a protest against a tax on tea imports.

In 1774, the Second Continental Congress met to decide what action to take against the British, and John Hancock attended. Because of all his popular actions against the British, they wanted him arrested. In April 1775, he and Samuel Adams escaped capture by British troops at Lexington, after Paul Revere warned them in time.

During the Revolutionary War that followed, Hancock raised funds for the army. He also led 5,000 troops to try to recapture Newport, Rhode Island, which the British held. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was ready to be signed. Hancock was the first person to sign, and his signature was one of the biggest on the document. The phrase 'John Hancock' is sometimes used to mean a signature even today.

In 1780, Hancock became the first governor of Massachusetts after independence. Years later he led the state in ratifying the U.S. Constitution. He was still serving as governor when he died in 1793.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'colonial'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'colonial' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'colonial'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'colonial'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'colonial' means.

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: recapture	retake

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

As Great Britain imposed taxes on shipping in the colonies, Hancock's business was affected.

John Hancock was born in the colony of Massachusetts in 1737.

After the Declaration of Independence was produced, Hancock was the first person to sign it.

In the end, the Revolutionary War broke out between Great Britain and America.

After independence, Hancock was governor of Massachusetts, and led the state in ratifying the U.S. Constitution.

Hancock and others in Boston organized protests against the British.

After his uncle died, Hancock inherited his share of a shipping business.

Get to the facts

1 When did John Hancock get involved in politics?

2 What was Hancock caught and tried for?

3 Who warned Hancock of approaching British troops?

4 What was Hancock the first person to sign?

5 When did Hancock become Massachusetts' governor?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Paul Revere's warning

Imagine you are John Hancock in Lexington, Massachusetts, April 1775. It is night-time, and you are about to go to sleep. Suddenly you hear the hooves of a horse coming towards you...(now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'colonial'.
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Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – recapture Synonym – retake

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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Get to the facts:

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